

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

May 17, 2007  
1:30 p.m., MST

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Room 1 of the Arizona Senate Building, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. MST.

## **1. Call to Order**

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

Dr. John Baracy

Mr. Jim DiCello

Dr. Eugene Garcia

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan

Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein

Ms. Karen Merritt

Absent:

Ms. Anna Rosas

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

## **2. Presentation and Discussion of the English Learner Programs in Chino Valley Unified School District (CA)**

Mr. Alan Maguire introduced the presenters from Chino Valley, California: Art Hinojosa, Carol Garman, and Valerie Gracia. Art Hinojosa has 24 years of experience in education as a classroom teacher, a program specialist, assistant principal, elementary principal, and director of state and federal categorical programs. As Director, he is responsible for federal and state programs and mandates, such as Title I, Title III (LEP/Immigrant students), Title V, Program Improvement, English Language Learners, and Economic Impact Aid (EIA)-Limited English Proficient (LEP). In 2001, the school received two state recognition awards as a California Distinguished School and a High Achieving Title I School, both in the same year. As Director, in one year, he also led the district in exiting seven years as a “Comité” district. Labeling a district “Comité” is a process in which the California Department of Education designates a district not properly meeting the needs of English Learners and mandates corrective action to bring all English Language Learners (ELL) issues into compliance. Mr. Hinojosa is known as a strong and motivational instructional leader in the implementation of extraordinary instructional programs to meet the needs of *all* students and especially English Language Learners. His passion is the

motivating factor that moves him to try new and innovative approaches to improve the educational experience for students, parents, teachers, and administration.

Carol Garman has 27 years of experience in education as a Special Education Teacher, Elementary Teacher, Reading Specialist, Literacy Coach, and District/Site Mentor in Language Arts and Technology. For 18 years, she has been employed as a Reading Specialist at the elementary level with the Chino Valley Unified School District. During the last two years, she has been a Teacher on Assignment as the Title I/English Learner Program Specialist. In this capacity, she is responsible for the Title I Parent Involvement Program and works with 14 Title I schools. She also conducts English Language Development (ELD) trainings and provides coaching for elementary and secondary teachers with appropriate and effective teaching strategies using the California ELD/English Language Arts standards when working with English Learner students. She conducts annual workshops and assists in overseeing the administration of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), a state-mandated test to assess the English language proficiency of EL students for 36 K-12 school sites. As a Teacher on Assignment, Ms. Garman's duties also include assisting K-12 sites with proper instructional placement of EL students to ensure that all EL issues are kept in compliance with state and federal mandates.

Valerie Gracia has been teaching third grade at Richard Gird Elementary School for seven years. She has taught English Language Learners each of those years. For the past three years she has taught in a Structured English Language Immersion classroom. Also, she is a certified GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) trainer for the Chino Valley Unified School District. GLAD is a model for language development for English Language Learners, specifically targeting content areas of the state's grade level standards.

Mr. Maguire stated that Chino Valley has undertaken a number of activities the Task Force has discussed in terms of ELL programs, although California law differs from Arizona law. The time on task and longer periods spent on language acquisition is similar. He said that it should be helpful to hear their experiences in implementing their ELL program.

Mr. Hinojosa stated that the Chino Valley district is twenty-five miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The district was once rural but, over the decades, there has been tremendous change in the demographics including the influx of a multicultural representation that is now mostly of Hispanic origin.

There are approximately 32,000 students in the district of which about 4000 are ELL students. There are 49 different languages spoken in the district: about 85% of the ELLs speak Spanish. A law was passed in California in 1997 (Proposition 227) that gave parents more voice in placing their ELL students. Prior to that, ELL students were placed in a bilingual or dual language classroom. Implementation was not well guided, which left districts creating their own implementation programs. The Chino USD had been designated as not meeting the needs of its ELL students. There was no specific ELL program in the district and no real monitoring of the students; students could be designated as ELL in Kindergarten and remain in the ELL program

through high school. There was a large dropout rate at the high school level. In 1997, the district was labeled a “Comité” district, after a lawsuit was filed against districts not meeting needs of ELL students.

In 2001, Mr. Hinojosa became the Director of Categorical Programs and focused on changing this distinction. He identified the need for a consistent, cohesive ELD program, including specific entry and exit criteria, proper teacher training, and close monitoring. He developed a master plan that laid out step by step what was required of teachers, parents, and administrators to ensure ELL student needs were met. Teachers were expected to have a high level of understanding of the requirements of the ELL master plan and to concentrate not solely on teaching English, but English Language Development. As the ELD program was constructed, the focus was to develop an intensified span of teaching of the English language. At the secondary level, the district adopted six ELD courses. For beginning through intermediate proficiency ELL students, ELD 1 covered introduction to conversational and oral English; ELD 2 covered introduction to reading; ELD 3 was introduction to writing; and ELD 4 was grammar. For early advanced or advanced proficiency students, the courses were ELD 5, Early Literacy and ELD 6, Advanced Literacy.

Between May and October 2002, the district provided 20 hours of training with a follow-up quiz to ensure that teachers understood their role in the master ELD plan. In September 2002, the program was implemented. For elementary, the program was in place, but only to meet compliance with the state mandates. Based on SELP assessment results, the secondary level students were rapidly gaining in proficiency with their four hour program, and the elementary level ELLs were improving also, but not near the level of the secondary school ELLs. The hour block class lent itself more to the secondary level, but despite this, the district decided to implement systematic ELD instruction at the elementary level with a focus on grammar and teaching English as a second language, focusing on morphology, phonology, lexicon, semantics, and syntax. The program was piloted at five sites with ELL students in designated ELD classrooms based on their proficiency. Teachers went through the training and implemented their learning in class. By the end of the year, teachers were praising the staff development and seeing great gains in the English proficiency of their students. The program grew in popularity and has now branched out to schools with smaller ELL populations.

This is the third year of this ELL program, and approximately 180 teachers have been trained in this model. The district has five program improvement schools and, based on the performance of the schools that had previously held the distinction, district administrators firmly believe that after one year using this intensive ELD model, these schools should be able to break out of a low performing distinction.

Ms. Eileen Klein asked the total number of teachers in the district and what process they use to bridge the gap between trained and untrained teachers. Mr. Hinojosa replied that there are 1500-1700 teachers in the district. The model started with the high incidence schools and is proceeding to schools with only a few ELLs. The administrators have experimented with clustering grades for ELD classes. There is a waiting list for the staff development for ELD

training. ELL Coordinators, administrators, and key teachers, including department chairs, received the 20 plus hours of the master ELL plan. The training for the ELD classes is over 35 hours.

Ms. Garman explained the process of training in the Chino Valley program and implementation issues the district ran into especially in the first year. First, when they started with the five high incidence schools in Chino Valley, there were approximately 300 ELL students per school, enough to group ELLs within their grade level by proficiency. No more than two proficiency levels were grouped together in an ELD class. Key language principles were taught, including having students speaking in full sentences and encouraging a high level of speaking. They also had a language purpose, having a focus for the language. They taught, for example, in Kindergarten what a noun was, giving examples, practicing, and allowing independent practice.

The teacher training focused on the five points of language. Teachers learned how to produce an English Language Development plan, which is different than the English plans to which they had been accustomed. The training emphasized that teachers really needed to spend 45 minutes on grammar, 30 minutes on writing, etc. When the program was applied in a medium incidence level school with about 100 ELL students, clustering strategies were used. ELL students were clustered by grade or by multiple grades, if necessary. In the first year of implementation at the five schools, principals went through their own training to be able to monitor teachers in their teaching practices. There were monthly support meetings at the district level, follow-up days, coaching, and as the years progressed, they added more schools.

Ms. Garman stated that implementation can be accomplished. ELD can be difficult to implement, but once implemented, it can be very successful, shown not only in test scores, but also in the lives of students and the teaching ability of educators. At Chino Valley, there are plans to expand training to special education teachers. The model involves a few days of training and then classroom teaching and co-teaching, more training, and more teaching, until the teachers are confident in their new skills.

There was a concern about segregation. The goal in Chino Valley was to have a rapid acceleration of English Language Learning. At the elementary level, the district mixed ELLs and non ELLs in non-ELD subject areas such as art or physical education. One change they would have made to the program, now having gone through the process, would have been to more closely align their teaching with the CELDT assessment.

Ms. Karen Merritt asked about the California English language assessment. Ms. Garman replied that the district uses both the state-adopted California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and the IPT®, since the results from the CELDT can take up to six months to receive. Ms. Merritt asked about the source of the funding. Ms. Garman and Mr. Hinojosa replied the funding includes Title I, Title III, English Language Acquisition Program (ELAP) funds, immigrant funds, some state and some federal, and some Title II funds. Ms. Merritt asked when the staff development occurs. Ms. Garman replied that they had tried the summer schedule but

found teachers did not retain the training, so they now use professional development days during the school year.

Mr. Jim DiCello asked who developed the training. They received training from outside consultants as well as teachers from different parts of the state. Mr. Hinojosa learned from a teacher in Northern California and worked out the first block of training. There was such success that the teacher left to become a full trainer and consultant. Mr. DiCello asked how long it takes for ELLs to exit the program. The California law asks for one to two years to exit ELLs. For newcomers, this can be a problem. Prior to this program, in 1999-2000 the district had already switched to a structured SEI program. The reclassification rate was 5.4%. In 2000-2001 they reclassified 6.4%, and 2001-2002, they reclassified 180 students, or 4.5%. Once Mr. Hinojosa joined and restructured the SEI program, the district reclassified 327 students or 8.2% in the first year of the program. In 2003-2004, the second year of the program, that jumped to 14.3%, and held steady in 2004-2005, with 450 students at 14.2%. In 2005-2006 they reclassified 459 students or 12.9%. As of early May, they have reclassified 619 students for the most recent year. Their reclassification criteria are much higher than other districts. Students must achieve an Early Advanced or Advanced score on the California English Language Development Test, a Basic Proficient or Advanced on the California Standards Test, and in the spring they must pass a district writing prompt with a score of 3 out of 4 on the rubric. The district also requires a 2.0 GPA. When the district reclassifies a student, he or she is at grade level.

In the last four years, the district reclassification has exceeded the state average. Reclassified student progress is monitored. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked if the exit criteria were established earlier or later than the assessment scoring and NCLB. She asked if their standards are aligned with the language assessments. Ms. Garman and Mr. Hinojosa explained that the California English Language Development is similar to Arizona's AZELLA, and the California Standards Test is similar to AIMS. Ms. Garcia Dugan asked which one the teachers must focus on for NCLB. Ms. Garman stated that the students must take both; the one measures language proficiency, the other academic proficiency.

Ms. Johanna Haver questioned why students who passed the CELDT did not automatically qualify for reclassification into the mainstream class. She said there are native English speakers who are not able to pass academic proficiency tests. Mr. Hinojosa explained that those ELLs who are proficient on CELDT participate in a transitional classroom with native English speakers where they are still receiving some ELD instruction with a trained teacher. Ms. Haver asked if a particular group of English speaking students are selected to fill up these transitional classrooms. Mr. Hinojosa stated that students are placed according to SAT scores, but no students with identified learning disabilities are selected, only children with language issues that are not because of a learning disability. Ms. Garman said originally they had ELLs of all levels in mixed classrooms with mainstream English speakers and that this led to much teacher frustration. Teachers now are trained how to teach to the transitional ELL students in the context of their mainstream classroom.

Dr. John Baracy asked for more teacher training details. Ms. Garman answered that 40 teachers from five schools were chosen to apply the newly-designed SEI program. Training was designed by a consultant and the teachers went through 35 hours of training, plus coaching. Dr. Baracy asked how much staff it required that first year to support the program. Ms. Garman replied there were only two: Mr. Hinojosa and the one consultant. In year two, they added Ms. Garman to the training program; they trained another 60 teachers. This year they added the secondary schools, four more trainers, and trained another 180 teachers, and gave refresher courses and more coaching. The coaching has expanded tremendously. The total for the current program is one program director, five trainers, and one outside consultant. The estimate of cost for the current year includes a fee for the consultant of about \$100,000, salaries of trainers, and so on. A rough estimate for the current year is about \$350,000 for staff development for this program. The GLAD model came from Fountain Valley. This model has been around since the mid-1980s. Dr. Baracy asked for a copy of the data to which Mr. Hinojosa was referring.

Ms. Merritt asked how the other hours of the day in the secondary school are used after the four hours of ELD. Mr. Hinojosa stated that the students typically take a math course and P.E., which are in mainstream classrooms. Ms. Merritt asked about the second year. Mr. Hinojosa stated that if students have passed ELD 1-4 but have not reclassified, they take ELD 5 and 6 and then take math, science, etc. The district uses teachers who have learned SEI strategies for their other content areas. Ms. Merritt asked about the elementary school model and second year. Mr. Hinojosa stated that if students are not proficient, they are placed in the next grade level ELD classroom.

Ms. Valerie Gracia addressed the question of learning disabled ELLs and gifted ELLs. She teaches a highly intensified English Development class from Emergent to Intermediate proficiency. She has seen students exit mid-year. Prior to the last three years, on her first teaching job she was given a classroom with ELL students and had no idea how to work with them. She tried leveling, which decreased the science and social studies content for all the students. She didn't believe the needs of the students were being met. Through the professional development offered, she believes the ELL students are now receiving a better quality of education. One concern that has to be met is addressing the students' literacy issues as well. She has found different materials to help with this. Over the years, she has seen more and more interest in this type of program. Ms. Haver asked about her class size. Ms. Gracia replied that her current class has 20 ELL students of varying levels of English proficiency. Mr. Hinojosa stated that ELD classes at the secondary level are smaller than mainstream classrooms such as 15 or 20, but that elementary classes tend to be of similar size. Some sites have aides, but Mr. Hinojosa discourages the use of aides because students need the expertise of the teacher. Ms. Garman stated that her school, which is a high incidence school, uses aides and exited the needing improvement distinction the year that they implemented the use of aides. Funding is a formula for ELLs. If a district has 4000 ELLs, it may get \$250 per ELL, for example. English Learner ELAP is for grades 4-8 and is also based on the number of ELLs enrolled in those grades. All of these funding sources are used for the training, materials, program department, parental involvement, and anything else tied to the ELL program.

Dr. Eugene Garcia asked how long it takes on average for students to achieve the reclassification criteria, for example in third grade. Ms. Gracia stated in her class it is usually within a year or two. Mr. Hinojosa stated that it can take a pre-emergent (beginning) student 3-5 years to reclassify. This includes passing the California Standards Test, not only the language assessment. Dr. Garcia asked who is considered an expert for teaching these ELD classes. Ms. Gracia stated that the professional development she received was her background for teaching the ELD classes. Ms. Garman agreed, stating that 50 hours was the minimum, including the 35 hours of professional development and the coaching hours. Ms. Gracia stated she had received probably twice that.

Ms. Garcia Dugan asked what numbers the schools send for AMOs for the federal government. Mr. Hinojosa stated that for the state goals the AMAO goal is 50%. For only the language assessment, his district has a 64% proficient rate. The federal AMO number is based on only the CELDT scores. By the end of the second year most students are in a transitional class, having passed the CELDT. Dr. Garcia asked if the demand were 100% proficiency in one year, what changes they would make to the Chino Valley model. Mr. Hinojosa stated that one would need the secondary school (4 hour) model in the elementary schools, focused and well-trained teachers, and higher standards. The transitional class is pivotal in pushing the Intermediate level students up to Early Advanced or Advanced. The transitional class is more intensive, holding students not only to ELD standards but ELA standards. It is based more on reading comprehension, syntax, grammar, and writing strategies. Ms. Gracia teaches both.

Mr. Maguire asked if the proficiency banding is important to the program—that the transitional classroom is just another grouping strategy, moving the students that last extra push to match the mainstream class. Ms. Garman agreed. When the district administrators initiated the program, they asked for volunteers for the ELD teaching since it would be such an intense curriculum. Mr. Hinojosa said that another school in a lower economic area went through a major change in demographics, and the teachers were resistant to change. Last year they had a kindergarten teacher from that site who became aware of the program and wanted to be a part of it. She was trained and given intermediate ELL students. Just last month, the principal told Mr. Hinojosa that for the first time in twenty years teaching kindergarten, 17 students were reading at grade level, and only three were not. Ms. Merritt asked what changed. Mr. Hinojosa stated that the ELL strategies were implemented as well as the proficiency grouping strategy, and both contributed. They had been advised not to do the intensive ELL program at the kindergarten level, but he felt they should. Science and social studies are embedded into the lesson, but essentially the full day for kindergarten is focused on ELD.

Ms. Merritt asked what reclassification rates look like for kindergarten and first grade. Mr. Hinojosa stated that many districts do not test for reclassification for kindergarten and first grade but that he did so. In kindergarten and first grade, they use only the CELDT score, which does not include reading and writing. He added the reading component and a writing assessment. Ms. Merritt asked how many students would be considered proficient according to the CELDT after a year. Ms. Gracia stated that two years later, none of her ELL students are in the ELL program any longer; they are all proficient. Ms. Garcia Dugan asked that if there were a reading

and writing component in the CELDT and, after a year in the ELL program, if a kindergarten student passed the assessment, would he or she be reclassified. Mr. Hinojosa stated they still go into the transitional program. He has found that if they speak with no accent and appear to be fluent, they aren't given the proper support in a wholly mainstream classroom.

Dr. Baracy asked whether the model was considered a one year model or a two year model. Mr. Hinojosa said the state considers it a one year model, but he considers it a three year model for most students. Ms. Garman stated that the most important piece is the staff development. Ms. Garcia Dugan asked what has changed in the teacher programs in the universities in California. Mr. Hinojosa stated that new teachers are now graduating into the field with authorizations to work with ELL students where in the past they were not. It is now embedded in the training program for new teachers. This is a great asset to the students and districts. Mr. Hinojosa said that when he came on board, only a handful of the 1500 teachers in the district were authorized to teach ELLs. Now through a partnership with their association, they have 900 of their 1500 staff members authorized to work with ELLs. All teachers are also required to take their early literacy class. Ms. Merritt asked if they specifically get ELD training at the university. Mr. Hinojosa replied that no, they do not. He stated that two other districts have similar models as Chino Valley.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion of the Development of English Language Learner Models' Components**

This agenda item was moved to the next meeting.

### **4. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities**

Mr. Alan Maguire discussed a summer plan, stating that in future meetings the Task Force will discuss implementation, the processes of going from an intellectual discussion to classroom activities. He stated there will be research brought to the Task Force and that hopefully in the next two meetings they can begin to bring this exercise to some kind of closure and guide districts in what they need to be doing. He asked Task Force members to fill out their June availability forms in order to arrange for June meetings.

Dr. Garcia asked that there be more consultation with Task Force members on agenda items to be sure that all the research necessary is covered. At this point decisions will need to be made, and he expressed a need for more information of upcoming agenda items. Mr. Maguire stated he would list what he considered to be the next steps. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan proposed that at the next Task Force meeting the Task Force adopt some key components of the model so that the field can adopt a master schedule for the fall. Over the course of the summer the Task Force can get into more specifics.



Dr. Baracy stated that he could not support a partial model. Mr. Maguire agreed. Dr. Baracy stated most schools have already developed their schedules and that the Task Force simply needs to work on the full model. Dr. Garcia agreed, saying the models must go through the appropriate approval process. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that the Task Force has had extensive discussion on the definition of ELD and that adopting at least a definition of ELD would help districts know what they need to do. Ms. Johanna Haver agreed, stating that in this coming school year the students will remain in mainstream classrooms with the same programs. Dr. Garcia stated that until the models are approved no changes can be required. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that the Task Force could vote on the definition of ELD, the four hours of ELD, and the grouping of ELLs together, which would apply to all models adopted. Dr. Garcia said that the Department of Education could also stipulate this. Dr. Baracy said that he understands the frustration of the arduous process but the law must be followed, and likely by the time the models are fully approved the time for staffing decisions will be long past. Dr. Garcia stated that the four hours is but one component and that the models will need all of the components to be successful. Mr. Jim DiCello requested that a vote be put on the next meeting as an agenda item.

## **5. Call to the Public**

Mr. Alan Maguire made a call to the public at 3:37 p.m. Ms. Cindy Segotta-Jones from Cartwright Elementary School District spoke, asking for information to be clarified for the field so that practitioners can prepare their classrooms. She asked for a clarification on what constitutes the first year of the program and what will be required for the second year in the ELL program. She asked what grouping strategy will be used for second year ELLs and if the grouping strategy applies for all ELLs or only first year. She also asked what the models will look like for kindergarten. Her district has tested 8600 PHLOTES this year. Of those students, 4016 are first year. Of those 4016 first year ELL students, 800 are kindergarten level.

## **6. Discussion of future meetings**

The next Task Force meeting is on May 24. Mr. Alan Maguire asked Task Force members to fill out their June availability forms in order to arrange for June meetings.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

## **Arizona ELL Task Force**

Alan Maguire, Chairman

August 15, 2007